

**Housing
Executive**

2024 EDITION

streetsahead

nihe.gov.uk   

The magazine for
Housing Executive
tenants



News > Features > Advice > Community

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Welcome

...to this year's edition of your magazine, Streets Ahead!

As always, it has been a busy and challenging year but, working together we have been able to achieve a great deal.

In September of this year we were delighted to hand over the keys to the first homes we have built in a generation. We hope that these six high quality, comfortable and energy-efficient homes for tenants in north Belfast, will be the first of many new houses we build in the future. You can read more about the innovative techniques used in the construction on pages 48 and 49.

Over the last year we continued to invest in your homes, spending over £200m on improvements and maintenance. Our priority and focus is always to provide homes that are safe, warm and dry so we are pleased to be able to increase our investment to £270m this year.

Retrofitting our properties and increasing their energy efficiency helps to make your home more comfortable and reduce heating bills. In 2023/24 we invested £36.36m on energy efficiency improvement measures. This included the completion of our Energy Efficiency in Social Housing project, part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund, which saw 1,400 of our homes retrofitted.

During the year we also commenced a Low Carbon Retrofit Programme of 300 properties, that will test various new low carbon heating options. Work within the programme includes improved cavity wall insulation, improved loft

insulation, improved ventilation and air tightness measures around windows and doors. Each house will get a solar photovoltaic system to generate electric from daylight and an electric battery to store electric during cheaper night-time tariffs. New heating systems featuring heat pumps or gas hybrids will also be fitted. You can read more about this on page 19.

Homes are just one part of building a community and we know that we can only create thriving, cohesive and inclusive communities with you. This year we invested over £700,000 into your communities through Cohesion funding. This facilitated projects like a sports coaching programme in Armagh, a community festival in Derry/Londonderry, an urban sports event in Strabane and a super cup league in Belfast, to mention just a few.

We want all of you to be empowered to shape your community. Your voice helps us to co-design and co-develop services and support that are relevant and beneficial for you. The Housing Community Network and Central Housing Forum gives you the opportunity to be involved in decision making with us. There are lots of ways to get involved and you can find out how on pages 24 and 25.

I know that rising living costs continue to affect many of you so the services of our Financial Inclusion Team remain more important than ever. In 2023/24 the team responded to 4,267 referrals made by front-line staff, double the number in the previous year.

Housing Executive



They have set up five separate, regular drop-in clinics and attended 23 one-off events to help promote their services, with many more planned for next year. If you need help or advice you can find out how to access this service on page 10.

I am delighted that we have recently been reaccredited with the Customer Service Excellence Standard. It recognises the dedication and commitment of our staff and our ongoing commitment to putting you, our customers at the heart of everything we do.

I hope you find this edition useful and informative and wish you all a happy and peaceful festive season.

Grainia Long

Grainia Long
Chief Executive

How we're doing



We currently manage over

83,000*
homes.

Received over

482,111



phone calls to our offices



78%

of you said that you were **satisfied with the overall service provided by us**



Our Financial Inclusion Team generated an additional

£2.21m

in annual benefit entitlement for our customers



7,557

native trees and whips planted



We carried out

24,594

elemental improvements, including window/door replacements, heating installations and roof repairs



Almost

£545k

invested to address community safety issues in our estates

160,047

tenants - **32,015** younger than 16 years old and **44,574** aged 60 years old and over.



We invested over

£209.1m

in our homes in 2023/24



27

MAJOR ADAPTATIONS

3,894

MINOR ADAPTATIONS



started so people could continue to live independently in their home

We invested

£268k

in our communities through community grants



We funded

132

GOOD RELATIONS PROJECTS

20

RACE RELATIONS PROJECTS

85%

of you said that your rent and rates provide value for money

*Figures correct at March 2024

Fire Safety



A few simple steps can reduce the likelihood of fire in your home and give you peace of mind.

- Smoke detectors identify smoke at the earliest stages of a fire, giving you crucial extra time to get out of your home. You should test your smoke detector every week and should contact us straight away if you are having issues with any of them;
- Kitchen fires can start when cooking is left unattended. You should remain in the kitchen while cooking your meals to reduce the risk;
- Do not overload electric sockets. If you are concerned about faulty wiring or appliances, get them checked straight away;
- Chargers should not be left on for too long as they can result in devices overheating and causing a fire;
- Candles and tea lights should always be in proper holders and positioned away from curtains and clothes. Never leave candles unattended;
- A fire escape plan can save lives. Make an escape plan and share it with everyone in your home. Keep exits clear so people can get out safely and make sure door keys are easy to find.

If a fire should occur, try to keep calm and act quickly.

Close the door, make sure everyone leaves the property and call 999 straight away.

For more information

For fire safety advice and tips visit our website at www.nihe.gov.uk

You can also contact the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service at www.nifrs.org

Milestones from our year



Coming to the end of another busy year we look back at some of the work and events that stood out in our calendar.

During **National Apprenticeship Week**, we recognised the vital role apprentices play in our workforce. Over the last ten years, 300 apprentices and graduates have been recruited across a number of roles including housing services, plumbing, joinery, electrics, IT, project management and quantity surveying. Find out more about the career paths we offer on **page 44**.

Thank you



to our Apprentices

Housing
Executive

National
Apprenticeship
Week 2024

Rural awards

Our **Rural Community Awards** event once again provided a showcase for individuals and groups undertaking outstanding volunteering work at grassroots level in rural areas across Northern Ireland, helping maintain local neighbourhoods and boosting civic pride.



New youth committee makes history in housing



The South Antrim Housing Community Network Youth Sub-committee held their first meeting in February. During the inaugural meeting the young people discussed local needs, how we can play a role and how community cohesion funding can generate changes for the better.



£1m windfall for Windyhall homes

Homelife for tenants in Coleraine has been enriched by a major external upgrade totalling almost one million pounds. External paintwork and other enhancements were carried out at 211 of our homes.

In April, we announced details of a £55m investment in energy efficiency measures for our homes – read more on **page 19**.



Our volunteers take on Age NI Shop Challenge



In June some of our colleagues participated in a Shops Challenge event to raise money for our charity partner AGE NI.

One million trees keep our green canopy growing

In July, we celebrated the total number of trees on our estates and woodlands topping the one million mark by planting a new ash tree at Glasvey Park in Dunmurry. Our trees and woodlands contribute hugely to the natural environment, providing habitats, sustaining biodiversity and helping reduce carbon. We also recognise the benefit of our green spaces for residents mental well-being and pledge to continue to contribute towards Northern Ireland's growing green canopy.

Our first new homes in 25 years showcase social sector energy efficiency future



In September, six, brand new homes, the first we have built in a generation were finalised for allocation to tenants in north Belfast. Read more on **page 48**

2024-2029 Community Involvement and Cohesion Strategy launched

In October, we launched our new Community Involvement and Cohesion strategy. The new strategy provides a unique framework for the Housing Executive and our tenants, residents and leaseholders to work together to build strong, diverse, connected communities.



Being Energy Efficient

As the Home Energy Conservation Authority for Northern Ireland, we care about reducing domestic energy consumption without compromising on comfort levels.

To help save energy and money here's some helpful advice.

Not sure where to start?

Taking small actions can lead to big savings.

Call our NI Energy Advice Line for free and impartial advice on **0800 111 4455**. Our Energy Officers focus on the best way to help your household save energy.

You can also ask for advice via email at NIenergyadvice@nihe.gov.uk or using our Get in touch form on our website.

Try our Energy Saving Tool

Our free energy saving tool can provide you with a tailored action plan to help you take steps to reduce energy and costs.

Here's a handy QR code to go straight to the energy advice tool,



or you can go to our website: www.energyadvice@nihe.gov.uk

Switch and Save

Switching your energy provider is easy.

There is no cost to switch, and your supply will not be interrupted. To help you consider your options try the Consumer Council's switching tool to compare power tariffs for local suppliers. The Consumer Council for Northern Ireland provides advice and information for all residents here. They can also

investigate and resolve complaints, and advocate for you. Go to the consumers tab on their website to get access to lots of information about switching supplier and price comparison tables www.consumerCouncil.org



Oil Savings Network



One of our tenants from Drumellan in Craigavon, told us:

"I found the Oil Savings Network good, and I recommended it to my family and friends, it gives you a chance to stock up for the winter months." "Savings are around £10-£20 for a 200 or 300 litre order."

The NI Oil Savings Network (NIOSN) is open to all homes across Northern Ireland. We can usually find members a price lower than the average heating costs per litre, saving around £10-£20.

How do I join?

Send an email to oilsavings@nihe.gov.uk with 'Register' in the subject line.

When you provide your first name, your mobile number and postcode, you automatically become a member. You can take advantage of the current savings immediately.

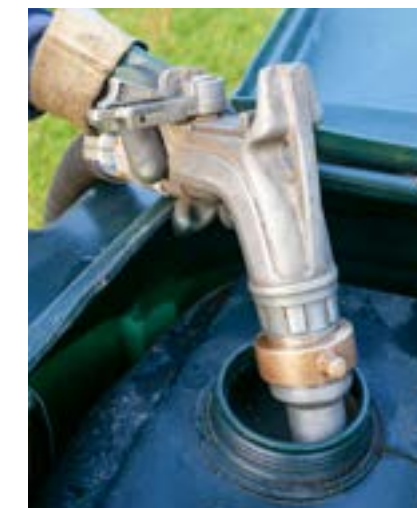
What happens then?

Joining the network means you can order oil at a discount each week or whenever you need a refill.

All registered members receive a weekly request by email, text, or (in exceptional circumstances) by phone for your 'potential' order.

Placing your order

If you wish to place a tentative order, reply to our request with the amount you are considering ordering – there is no obligation to purchase.



Members who respond to the weekly request receive a discount code, e.g., **OIL1109**.

If you decide to place an order you call the supplier to make the order and quote the discount code. Then you arrange delivery and payment with the supplier, as normal.

Discounts are valid for up to one week, starting Wednesday, and are not valid online.

If you don't need to order oil, you can ignore the weekly prompt. You can stop the weekly prompts at any time. Supplier savings can differ depending on your postcode.

Want to know more?

Contact our energy advisors on NI Energy Advice Service on **0800 111 4455** You can also get in touch using our eform at nienergyadvice@nihe.gov.uk

Tenants £6.4m better off

Since 2020, our Financial Inclusion team has secured over £6.4 million in additional finances for our tenants. To date, over 13,600 tenants have been referred to our team, averaging over 250 per month.

The Financial Inclusion team make sure our tenants are claiming all the benefits they are entitled to, and support and empower them to make the right financial decisions for their household, especially whilst the cost of living remains high.

We can help you by:

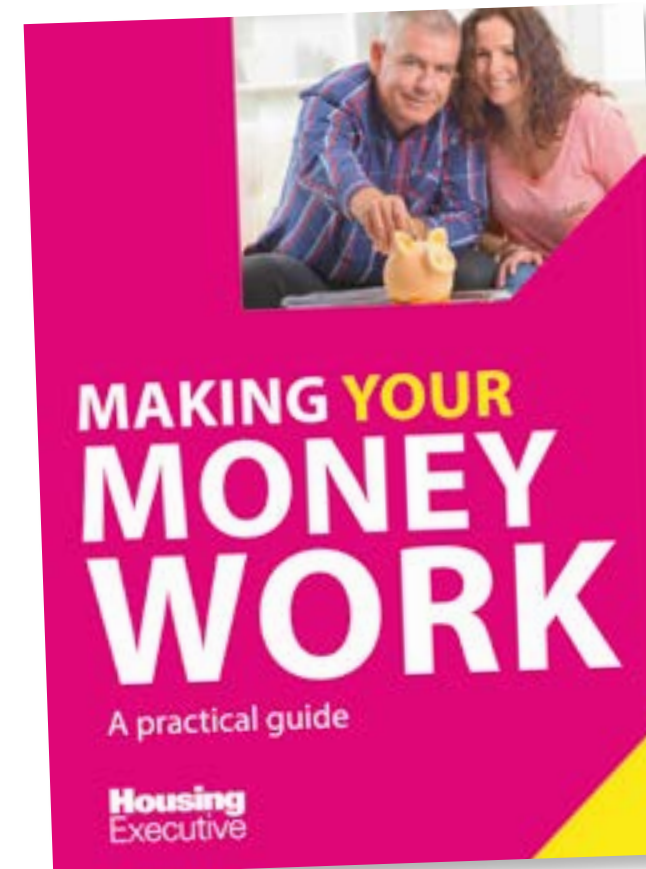
- Providing benefits checks to make sure you are receiving everything you are entitled to
- Performing 'Better off' calculations to help you make informed decisions about your finances
- Helping to resolve complex benefits issues
- Providing money and budgeting advice
- Signposting to other specialist sources of debt advice
- Assisting with access to other sources of support (e.g. charitable organisations, discretionary support, food banks, etc.).

If you'd like to chat to one of the Financial Inclusion team, call your local patch manager for a referral on **03448 920 900**.

Our Deputy Financial Inclusion Manager, Sarah, recently helped a tenant who had suddenly lost a parent. The young woman was struggling to pay her rent and rates on sick pay alone as she thought she was only entitled to a small amount of Universal Credit. Sarah helped her to apply for other benefits that she was entitled to. As a result, her weekly benefit income has increased by over £150, and she has one less thing to worry about.



You may have seen advertisements about Universal Credit and how benefits are changing. If you have received a 'Migration Notice' or want to know more about what this may mean for your benefits in the future, please contact the Financial Inclusion team. You don't have to navigate the move to UC alone, the Financial Inclusion team can check you are receiving the right benefits and can answer any other questions you might have about moving to Universal Credit; they can even advise you about how and when to apply!



If you are in rent arrears, had a reduction in or lost your entitlement to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, or have had a significant change in your circumstances, our 'Making Your Money Work' service can help.

Our confidential service could help you by providing:

- A benefits assessment to make sure you are receiving all the support you are entitled to;
- A budgeting assessment to assess your income and outgoings to help you with household budgeting;
- Referral to one of our Financial Inclusion Managers if (see previous page)

- A referral to other specialist support organisations if you require advice or assistance with other issues

Want to know more?

For help and advice on using our Making Your Money Work service, contact your local Patch Manager on 03448 920 900.

Build your own Budget

A budget is a great way to keep track of your spending - you can put aside money for the things you need and maximise your income. It's easier than you think!

Our Benefits & Budget calculator, which you can find on our website www.nihe.gov.uk can help you work out what benefits you're entitled to. You can also see how a change in earnings or the numbers of hours you work will impact your monthly income.

Floating Support

What is Floating Support?

Floating Support refers to the network of other organisations we work with, who can help tenants with issues directly impacting their housing or financial situation.

How can I be referred?

If, while offering the 'Making Your Money Work' service you tell our staff that you have an issue which is covered by a Floating Support provider, and which is causing you housing or financial stress, you may be referred for further assistance.

The staff member you are dealing with can make this referral for you. Alternatively, they can provide you with the contact details so you can speak to the organisation directly if you would prefer.



Advice NI is a registered charity providing free, specialist, independent, debt advice to our tenants. They are experts in debt management and solutions.

Our staff can refer you to Advice NI, but you can contact them directly:

- Freephone number 0800 915 4604
- Text 'ACTION' to 81025 for a call back
- E-mail advice@adviceni.net
- Contact the Advice NI online "Let's Chat" service between 10.00am and 4.00pm Monday to Friday, accessible via their website, www.adviceni.net

Taking first steps in the Walled City

We travelled to Derry-Londonderry to learn more about how the First Housing team are supporting people to live independently, learn new skills and connect with their local community.

Through our Supporting People programme, we provide funding to First Housing to provide floating support to individuals and families living within the Western Health and Social Care Trust area. It has been a huge success, with hundreds of people receiving help from the team since the service was established in 2005.



When the First Housing team receive a referral, they get in touch with the person to find out what their individual needs and goals are.

“Once you are referred to us, we will get in touch with you to have a chat about your needs and what your goals are,” explained Catherine, one of their Floating Support Workers. “We will then create a support plan, that is tailored just for you, to help you take steps that will make your life easier.”

First Housing can help you with:

- Learning practical living skills such as cooking and budgeting
- Navigating the benefits system so you get what you’re entitled to
- Improving your health and wellbeing
- Accessing training, employment and educational opportunities.

“The team also work closely with us, so they can help you live in your Housing Executive home or improve your housing situation. They are there to provide additional support with things such as applying for a transfer or supported accommodation and understanding your tenancy rights.”



Catherine is a Floating Support Worker, within the Families/25+ Floating support service, covering the Derry-Londonderry/Limavady areas.

It’s something Catherine is very passionate about.

“We can help you achieve your goals no matter how big or small. I’ve helped people do everything from using a keypad meter for the first time to arranging a payment plan to tackle debt. It really is centred around you.”

Put yourself first

If you would like support with living independently in your home, speak to your Patch Manager. They can refer you to First Housing, if you live in the areas they deliver services in, or arrange for you to receive help from another provider.

“I love working here as I help people become more confident, independent and happier. It’s a real privilege to help someone grow.”



The team catch up on their way to work at the First Housing premises on Bishop Street, Derry-Londonderry.

Managing condensation in your home

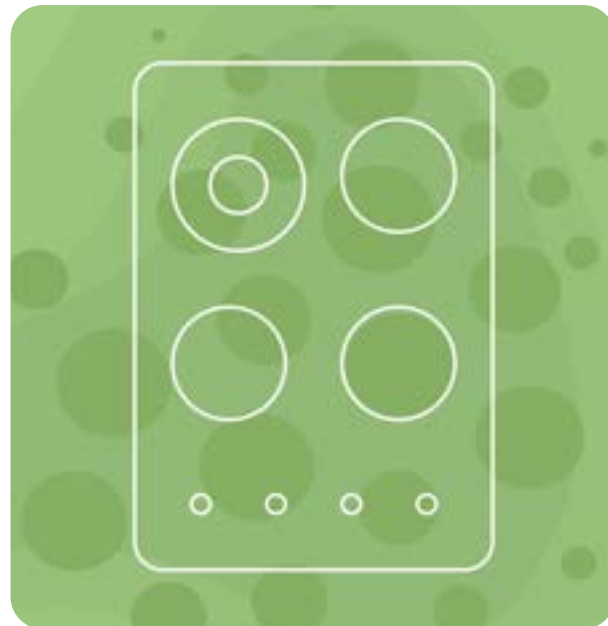
Condensation is the most common form of dampness in the home. Left untreated, it can cause black mould growth on walls, ceilings, furniture, clothing and even in or behind wardrobes and cupboards. There are however some steps you can take to stop it from becoming a problem.

What is condensation?

When moisture held in warm air meets a cold surface, like a window or a wall, it condenses into water droplets. This is called condensation. It usually appears on cold outside walls and surfaces, and in places where the air does not circulate well, such as cupboards or corners of rooms.

Most homes can be affected by condensation at some time. It generally occurs when a lot of moisture and steam are produced.

There are a few simple things you can do to reduce condensation in your home.



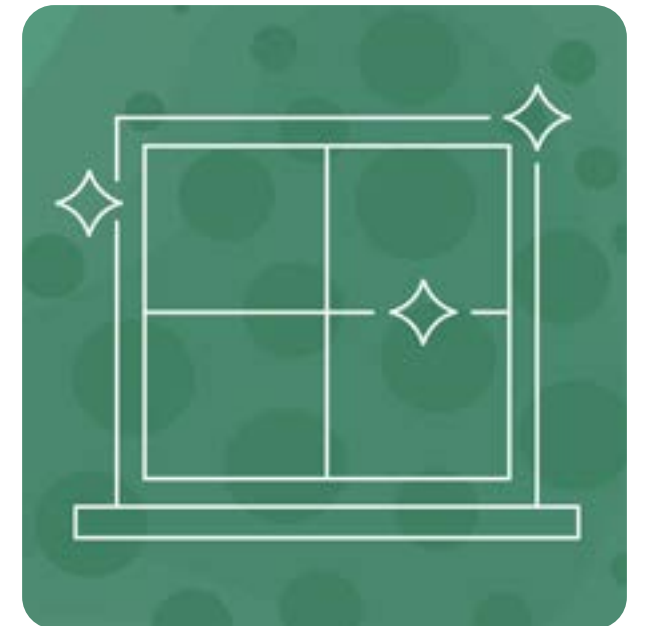
Kitchen

1. When you're cooking keep the kitchen door closed.
2. Cover pots when cooking and use an extractor fan if you have one.
3. If you can, open a window to let the steam out.



Bathroom

1. Keep the bathroom door closed to prevent steam leaving the room.
2. Use an extractor fan if you have one.
3. If you can, open a window to let the steam out.



Ventilating your home

1. Keep trickle vents open.
2. Open your windows throughout the day when you can.
3. Wipe up any condensation on and around your windows.
4. Maintain a constant temperature.



Housing Executive tenants Margaret and John Gault.

£1m windfall for Windyhall homes

Homelife for tenants in Coleraine has been enriched by a major external upgrade, totalling almost one million pounds.

External paintwork and other enhancements were carried out at 211 homes.

Margaret and John Gault, tenants of Windyhall Park for 42 years said, "We are very happy with the work that has been completed at our house.

"The external cream paintwork has really brightened up the whole look of our home.

"We have lived here for over 40 years and raised our son here. We love Windyhall.

"We have wonderful neighbours, many of whom are in Housing Executive properties and take real pride in their homes.

"John and I have always had a great relationship with any Housing Executive staff that we have dealt with over the years.

"John wasn't very well for a long time and the patch managers went out of their way to help.

"We are thankful for this scheme and welcome any others that might come our way.

"We got new heating a while back which is great, and we are hoping to get new windows in the future."

Countrylife is the best life according to tenants who have been calling rural North Antrim home for over three decades.

Proud residents of a Housing Executive bungalow in Dunloy, Geraldine and Michael Crilly extol the virtues of village life, "We have lived in our home for 35 years and I hope we will live here for many years to come.

"Geraldine grew up a few houses down in McClelland Park and when we first got married we lived with her mother before being offered the house we are in now.

"We love living in the fresh air of the countryside and in such a close-knit and caring community.

"Our relationship with the Housing Executive staff is very good and we never feel isolated.

"We have had many improvements made to our home over the years and are still discovering the benefits of the most recent thermal upgrade programme completed at our home."

Works were carried out to 23 Housing Executive homes in Dunloy, Rasharkin and Ballymoney and included, kitchen and bathroom refurbishments, rewiring, insulation, roof repairs and replacement of cladding.

Michael adds, "Our home environment is cosier and more cost effective while our new wet room and kitchen are being put to very good use.

"We even have new doors at the front and back and a canopy to keep us dry when it's raining.

"I must say the contractors were excellent and all the work was done very quickly. We are extremely grateful to the Housing Executive for improving our home to this standard.

A lifetime under one roof in the country



Geraldine and Michael Crilly outside their bungalow in Dunloy.

"We love living here and even more so now with all the work that's been done to the house. "It gives us such pride in our home knowing that it is more energy efficient and therefore environmentally friendly."

Mark Alexander, Housing Executive Area Manager, Causeway said,

"We regularly engage with our rural tenants across the Causeway area and are always happy to meet satisfied clients and hear what they have to say about our services.

"Listening to the feedback from Michael and Geraldine confirms that we are managing and meeting our rural customer's expectations.

"I wish them many more years of happiness in their home."

Getting your home adapted

We can carry out improvement works to your home to help you to live independently at all stages of your life.

We are able to complete certain minor adaptations without the need for an Occupational Therapist recommendation. These are detailed via the select list within the Adaptations Toolkit on our website and include:

- Fitting handrails
- Lowering electrical sockets to an accessible level
- Adding power points
- Defining steps for people with visual impairments.

Requests for minor adaptations that do not require an Occupational Therapist recommendation can be made by calling our Customer Service Unit or via our tenant portal, My Housing Executive.

If you are experiencing difficulties living in your home independently, it is important to let your patch manager know so that we can find out how we can help meet your needs.

Major adaptations

If we need to carry out a major adaptation to your home, such as building an extension or installing a stair lift, your patch manager will signpost you to your local Occupational Therapy Service.

An occupational therapist will need to carry out an assessment. This will look at your needs and how they can be met through a range of services. They will send a recommendation onto us if they think that doing major adaptations to your home would help you.

Did you know that you can request an adaptation to your home on the My Housing Executive portal?

You can also contact your local office by calling **03448 920 900**.



£55m investment in energy efficiency



“Thanks to this programme, 1,400 of our homes are warmer, more energy efficient and have a reduced carbon footprint.”

At our annual Sustainability Symposium in April, we announced details of a £55m in energy efficiency measures for our homes.

Speaking about the investment, our Chief Executive Grainia Long explained: “Our Low Carbon Retrofit Programme will deliver a ‘whole house’ solution, to help reduce carbon emissions, lower householder bills and provide a healthier environment.

“The energy efficiency measures will see some homes fitted with low carbon heating options like air source heat pumps and the use of renewable energy for power generation and electric storage.

“This exciting programme is just one strand of our £55m investment plan. These plans will help combat the very real pressures created by fuel poverty and the cost of living crisis.

“The low carbon retrofit scheme follows the completion of our first large-scale retrofit programme with EU Interreg funding and match funding from the Housing Executive at over £31m.

A ground breaking £9m scheme involving the low-carbon retrofitting of 300 homes is part of this investment. The scheme will see upgrades to 300 homes by March 2025 in Strabane, Dunmurry, Newtownards, Sion Mills, Dungannon and Antrim.



Our tenant Stacey Fee (left) welcomed our Chief Executive Grainia Long, (centre) and Head of Sustainability Robert Clements (right) to her West Belfast home to see how she had benefited from recent energy efficiency upgrades as part of The Low 300 Carbon Programme.

Keeping our communities safe

While the majority of our neighbourhoods are safe and popular places to live, we know that nuisance and anti-social behaviour (ASB) can have a significant impact on you and your family.

This is why it is important that you know what to do if you're worried about anti-social behaviour.

Report ASB

A complaint about anti-social behaviour can be made in writing/ email, in person or phoning any of our local offices. A complaint does not have to come from the individual experiencing the anti-social behaviour. If you prefer someone else, such as a relative, friend or representative, can make a complaint for you.

We act on all complaints including those made anonymously. However, in the absence of direct evidence from a complainant it may prove difficult to fully investigate such cases.

It is important when reporting anti-social behaviour that you provide as much detail as possible including the date and time of the incident. If you can tell us the individuals involved, where it happened, and who was affected by the anti-social behaviour. We have incident diaries

available that can assist in recording and collating this information.

We are here to support you

If you make a complaint, we will respond in a sensitive way, and take appropriate action to tackle the problem, taking your wishes into account. This may involve working with organisations such as the PSNI and your local council.

All witnesses have a crucial role to play in tackling ASB and we will ensure that they are provided with support throughout the process. We can organise support for victims and witnesses, by making referrals to specialist organisations such as Victim Support Northern Ireland.

Mediation - it's good to talk

We understand that disputes can happen from time to time and that it may not always be easy to agree or find resolution.

Our community safety team can provide help with referral to mediation.

Many disagreements can be sorted out through informal discussions or negotiation but when that's unsuccessful, mediation can be an effective alternative.

When mediation is used at an early stage, it can help prevent a dispute from escalating to the point where significant action is necessary.

Mediation may not be appropriate in all instances and victims' wellbeing and safety is always a top priority for us.

Mediation helps people to reach their own solutions. The professional mediator, as an independent third party, aims to help both sides find an acceptable resolution.

This service is confidential and any discussions cannot be used in court or any other legal proceedings at a later date.

Find out more

For more details visit www.nihe.gov.uk and search for Community Safety Team or contact your local Housing Executive office.



Looking to the future in Lurgan



The team help young people make informed decisions on everything from socialising safely to planning for the future.

Earlier this year we met with the Drumgor Detached Youth Work project team. We found out how they're empowering young people, living in the north Lurgan area, to foster new friendships and make positive decisions that will improve their wellbeing.

The team told us how they are setting young people up for the future. The majority of the work takes place in the evenings and involves running a range of programmes, using money from our Community Safety fund, that equip the young people with skills they need to overcome challenges in their lives. These programmes, which incorporate everything from firework safety events to cookery sessions, are made easy for them to access and participate in.

Their staff are also there to provide information on everything from issues around drugs to bullying so the young people can make informed choices. If they are worried or concerned, the team can then signpost the young person onto specialist advice agencies so they can get the right support at the right time.

Sorcha O'Hanlon, Senior Youth Worker, told us why the project has been so successful;

.....
 "We know not all young people are the same. This is why we look beyond negative stereotypes to find out what's going on in their lives and work out how can we be there for them".

"The work we do is called detached youth work. That means we go out to where the young people socialise and meet so we can engage with them in a meaningful way. It's done on their terms, so they feel comfortable sharing how they are feeling, and this gives us opportunities to build positive relationships with them.

"The team are always looking to meet the evolving needs of young people living in the north Lurgan area and with the ongoing support from the Housing Executive, are already making plans to help them shape a brighter future for themselves."



Detached youth work involves engaging with young people in areas where they choose to meet. This helps build positive relationships with young people who do not typically use traditional youth services.



Get to know your Good Relations Officer

They can offer your community group support and help you apply for funding so you can get your projects off the ground.

Visit nihe.gov.uk to find out who your local Good Relations Officer is.

Boost your community to work for you!

We want all our tenants, residents and leaseholders to have a voice and help us to make decisions that improve your community, building strong, supportive and inclusive neighbourhoods.

There are lots of different ways that you can become involved with your community, below are just a few.

The more you get involved, the more we can listen and learn to improve our services.

Community Groups

Residents' or community groups are groups of residents from a local area who meet regularly to find ways to address issues and plan improvements in their community. You can join your local residents' or community group or even start a group in your area with our support.

Community Voices

As a 'Community Voice' you can represent your community as an individual if there is no community or residents' group in your area.

Housing Community Network

The Housing Community Network (HCN) is a group of forums who work closely with us to share information about housing and community issues, challenges, solutions and best practice. You can represent your community at various levels within the network – area level, regional level and central.

Underrepresented Forums

We have different forums you can join to speak for underrepresented groups including disability, rural and youth.

Scrutiny Forums

Scrutiny Forums involve tenants checking and challenging how we deliver our services by examining a service area and providing recommendations for improvement.

Thematic Working Groups and Task and Finish Groups

– You can volunteer to join one of our 15 working groups or task and finish groups to review areas such as welfare reform, digital inclusion and maintenance.

You can also help to guide our customer communications. Regular estate inspections identify concerns or areas for improvement in your area, mystery shopping to assess our services, our Tenant Satisfaction Survey Focus Group, surveys, conferences and networking events, training, community events and good practice visits.



(L-R) Jo Scott, Edith Rankin and Annette Scott from Millisle and District Community Association.

Jo Scott, Chair of Millisle & District Community Association said:

“The housing waiting list in Millisle prompted me to become more actively involved with the HCN. New homes have now been completed which has boosted our community. With Housing Executive funding we've been able to run our Big Lunch Weekend and other neighbourly inclusive activities that brings positivity to our area.”

Want to be involved?

Contact your local office on **03448 920 900** or visit our website: www.nihe.gov.uk/community



Family fancy dress winners at Downpatrick's Halloween event are members of the McMullan and Lane families pictured with Dan McEvoy (right) from Downpatrick Community Collective and Ashley Leach and Sean Murphy, Housing Executive

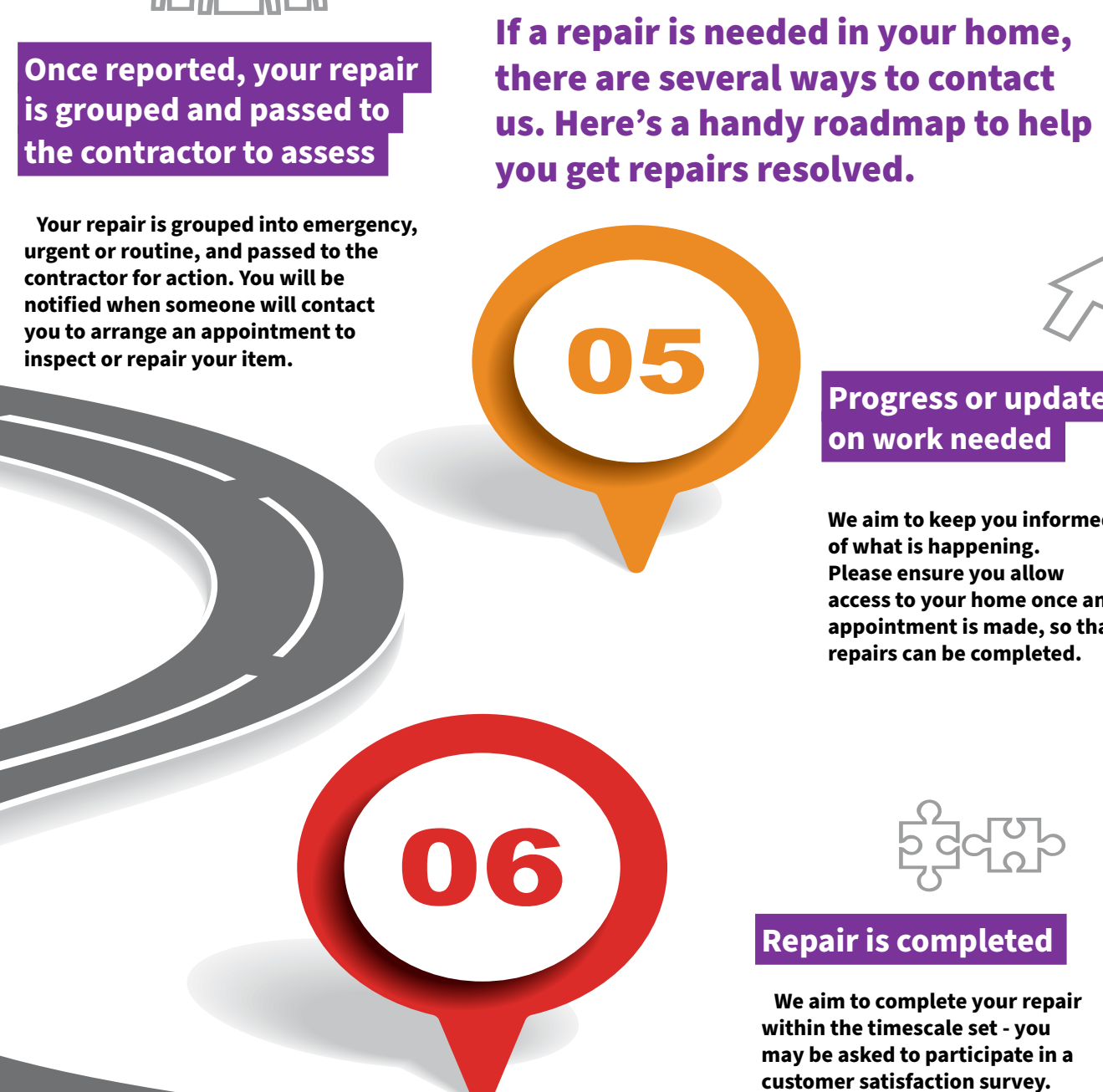
Dan McEvoy works with Good Morning Down and Downpatrick Community Collective. He said:

“Involvement with the Housing Community Network is useful for our community, it's a chance to connect with other community groups and is a good platform of communication for us. Funding has enabled us to host our annual Halloween and our Santa on Tour events in the town, which focuses on engaging with residents. Housing Executive funding also helps us reach over 190 customers every week with Good Morning Down.”



If you want to enquire about planned works such as replacing kitchens, windows, bathrooms, etc. Contact your local office for further information.

The road to repairs



Meet our Housing Heroes



Andy Mullan Good Relations Officer, North West Area

.....

We know a lot goes into making your house a home and our staff are here to help you with that. Check out this snapshot of some of the people that can support you to maintain your home and bring people together in your community.

We have **Good Relations Officers** that work across Northern Ireland. They're there to help community groups access funding, support and run programmes so they can make where they live better for everyone. They spend their time on the ground, at the heart of communities, so they can help the people living there make decisions that will help their area thrive.

Maintenance Officers are there to make sure that your home is safe and comfortable. They'll often visit your home if you have made a request for a repair so they can inspect the work and ensure that it has been carried out to a high standard. They can also help you get your home adapted so it continues to meet the needs of you and your family.



Jay Kernohan Maintenance Officer, Mid & East Antrim Area



Sarah Brown Belfast Customer Services Unit

When you report a repair, via the My Housing Executive portal, on the phone or in one of our offices, this will be processed by a member of our **Customer Service Unit**. They will help you work out what the repair issue is, if you're not sure, and send a request to one of our contractors. They'll also get in touch with you to arrange essential works to your home to be carried out such as getting your gas boiler serviced.

We're here to help...

If you would like to discuss your housing situation, or have any queries about your tenancy, get in touch by:

- Sending a message via our My Housing Executive portal
- Ringing us on **0344 920 900**

Open Doors service for Causeway area tenants

A holistic support service is opening its doors to any of our tenants struggling with the effects of the cost of living crisis in the Causeway area.

A holistic support service is opening its doors to any of our tenants struggling with the effects of the cost of living crisis in the Causeway area.

Vineyard Compassion's Open Door Project has received £100,000 from our Sustaining Tenancies Fund to support tenants by empowering and helping them towards employment, while providing emergency provisions during critical periods.

Ricky Wright, Vineyard Compassion Chief Executive said,

"An initial meeting and needs assessment with one of our trained compassion support workers, will provide the basis for the development of a Customer Support Plan, addressing a tenant's mental health, offering practical support and increasing their ability to manage their tenancy and engage with their community.

"We also offer a new telephone service to any Housing Executive tenant in the Causeway Coast and Glens area to provide a needs assessment, linking to other external support.

"On behalf of everyone at the Open Door Project, we're thankful for the Housing Executive's Sustaining Tenancies Programme - without this funding none of this support would be possible."

Mark Alexander, Housing Executive our Causeway Area Manager said,



(Left to right) Ashley Hewitt, Vineyard Compassion Support Worker, Mark Alexander, Housing Executive Causeway Area Manager, Miriam McAlister, Vineyard Compassion Programme Manager and Ricky Wright, Chief Executive, Vineyard Compassion.

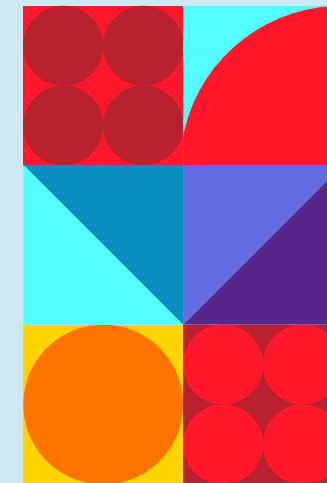
"Congratulations to everyone involved in such a worthwhile project.

"Anything helping our tenants achieve lasting change, overcome the challenges of the cost of living crisis and reduce the risk of tenancy breakdown, is to be commended."

Emma Geddis, our Sustaining Tenancies Grant Funding Programme Manager added:

"We are delighted that tenants in the Causeway area are able to benefit from this funding, which offers a variety of programmes to provide immediate practical support and assistance."

"With this funding support from the Housing Executive we are providing holistic and tailored support for tenants in the Causeway Coast and Glens council area through a range of initiatives including the Open Door project and others focussing on emotional health and well-being, digital inclusion, money management and also our social supermarket.



Housing Executive SUSTAINING TENANCIES Funding Programme

In July this year, we announced the latest round of our Sustaining Tenancies Grant Funding Programme, which will see an investment of over £3 million in the voluntary, community and charitable sector over the course of the latest Programme.

Emma Geddis, Sustaining Tenancies Grant Funding Programme Manager explains, "The Programme, which was first introduced in 2021, was developed to ensure that our tenants are supported to maintain their tenancies and in particular, to help any of our customers who are at greater risk of tenancy breakdown.

"To date, we have invested approximately £3.8 million which has supported 62 projects across Northern Ireland, providing valuable support to our tenants.

"In summer 2025, we will announce details for the next round of funding and will be encouraging organisations in the voluntary, community and charitable sector to apply for funding for grants between £5,000 and £100,000."

To find out more about support services available in your local area, contact your Patch Manager by calling 03448 320 900 or sending them a message on the My Housing Executive portal.

Building better community relations

We are always keen to support initiatives that promote integration, raise awareness and increase understanding around the increasingly diverse cultures that make up our communities.

Community and voluntary groups can apply for funding from our Community Cohesion and Involvement Grants to run these programmes.

Events can be one-off projects, to help individuals, families and groups to understand the services we provide with partner organisations, or they can be longer-term projects providing opportunities for people to build good relations, while gaining qualifications, or taster sessions that could lead to new employment opportunities.

See below examples of just some of the race relations and community capacity building events and initiatives we have funded over the last year.

If you have an idea for a project or initiative that could help build better community relations in your area, you can find the contact details for our community cohesion team on our website www.nihe.gov.uk by searching for 'community cohesion'. Or you can call them on 03448 920 900.



Stories of sacrifice inspire community cohesion

Young people heard from representatives from our local Polish community about the sacrifices made by Polish airmen during the second world war when they were stationed here. They learned about how they moved here with their families during the war years.

Project highlights included site visits to The Ulster Aviation Society, Northern Ireland War memorials and Polish airmen's graves as well as various workshops exploring the impact of World War Two and its aftermath on Poland and Northern Ireland.

Air cadets in South and East Antrim learned of their experiences as part of one race relations educational project funded through our Community Cohesion programme. As a result of this initiative young people were able to empathise and understand what it is like for people today to leave their home countries and settle in new ones.

Small world café

Hearing the real-life stories of people from all over the world is helping to improve race relations in South Antrim.

Listening Ear, a Newtownabbey advice charity facilitated a Small World Café evening session in Newtownabbey with support from our Community Cohesion Fund.

Small World Café is a Race Relations Project delivered by the Belfast-based Friendship Club. Through the natural process of chatting and storytelling the hosts addressed misunderstandings and myths, fostered respect, trust and empathy and brought the similarities between people to light.

The Small World Café encouraged small groups of four to six people to meet hosts from different countries for 20 minutes at a time. The hosts answered questions about their lives and explained how they ended up living in Northern Ireland, while the small groups circulated the space.



Young people play ball for good race relations

During the summer months, young football players from across Belfast were on the ball at a multi-cultural Junior Super League football tournament.

Young footballers from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds took part in the highly successful seven-a-side competition to help build relations between people from different backgrounds and cultures.

A range of participants took part in a good relations workshop, which was delivered by South Belfast

Alternatives, including young people from local social housing areas, local ethnic minority groups, asylum seekers and refugees.

Twelve teams took part in the six-week league in August and September. The event provided a welcoming safe space for different ethnic communities, while fostering positive inter-racial and local community relationships through sport and culture activities, irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender or religious beliefs.



Festival of the River overflows with fun

The popular Féile na hAbhann (Festival of the River) on Belfast's Lagan walkway provided an amazing array of sights and sounds. Thousands of people strolled along the river sidewalks taking part in and watching the fabulous annual celebration bring the city alive with festive spirit. The festival showcased the fantastic work of minority ethnic groups and was a real feast for the senses, bringing art, music and recipes from many different and exotic parts of the world together, illustrating the increasingly international diversity of the local area.

Waste Not, Want More!

Fed up of buying stuff you'll only use once or twice? Us too. This is why we visited Repair and Share Foyle to find out how their Library of Things enables people to borrow useful household items, and learn new DIY skills, without breaking the bank.

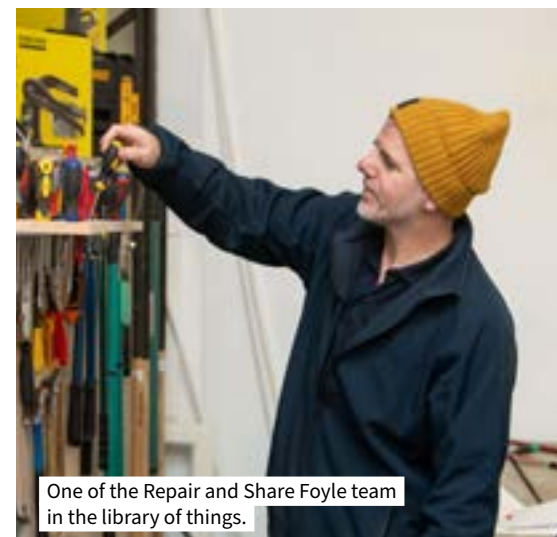
Caroline McGuiness-Brooks, one of the Directors of Repair and Share Foyle, was delighted to open the new premises in October.

Repair and Share Foyle has gone from strength to strength, since they were first set up by a group of volunteers in May 2022.

It all started by holding Repair Cafés in community venues throughout the Derry City and Strabane council areas. These cafés, which are still held twice a month, give people the opportunity to get items such as furniture and bicycles repaired for free. It's all done over a cuppa and a friendly chat with their experts.

In October they opened new premises, using money from our Social Enterprise Plus Programme, in Rath Mor Business Park in Derry-Londonderry. The building has been transformed into a community space where people can come to hold workshops, socialise and borrow from their Library of Things.

Caroline McGuiness-Brooks, one of the Directors of Repair and Share Foyle, told us their library is for sharers and doers; "Neighbours always used to lend things to each other and we want to bring that sense of community back.



One of the Repair and Share Foyle team in the library of things.

"Instead of buying things that you only need occasionally like hedge trimmers, carpet cleaners and power washers, borrow from us instead. It's saves you money, reduces clutter in your home and is good for the planet."

The group is always looking ahead and is planning to incorporate paint remanufacturing, where left over paint is repurposed, in the near future so people can also save money on decorating.

Thinking of giving your home a refresh in the New Year?

Then get in touch with Repair and Share Foyle.

How the LIBRARY OF THINGS works



Say no to buying new. Join the Library of Things and borrow what you need to complete your DIY project.

1. Pay £30 for a year's membership.
2. Subscribe to Share and Repair Foyle's e-newsletter so you can keep up to date with the inventory (more and more things will be added!).
3. As a member you'll be able to borrow everything from tools, sewing machines to camping equipment for up to a week.
4. Pick up or drop off any items you've borrowed on Tuesday evenings or Saturday Mornings.
5. Donate any items that you no longer use, but are in good working order, that could benefit other people in the community.

Repair & Share Foyle is offering Housing Executive tenants

100 gift codes worth £5 off new memberships!

Join for just £25 instead of £30 for the first year. Simply set up your membership on the website, then email repairsharefoyle@gmail.com with your name and the code: HEXELOT to claim. Visit repairandsharefoyle.org to learn more.



Your Patch Manager should be your first point of contact if you are having any housing issues.

They can also help you access services that support your personal development, regardless of your age or circumstances, so you can unlock your potential.

There are many ways that we support you and it all starts by getting in touch with your Patch Manager. They can refer you to services and local groups that can help you:

- Make your money go further and check you're getting what you're entitled to;
- Improve your physical and mental health;
- Access social supermarkets and local food banks;
- Get furniture, essential household items and decorations;
- Gain access to educational, training and employment opportunities;
- Stay safe in your home;

- Connect with people in your community.
The services you're able to access can vary depending on where you live but your Patch Manager will be able to guide you on who can best meet your needs.

Getting positive results for tenants

Peter McVey is a Patch Manager in Cookstown and is responsible for around 600 houses in the area.

Having previously worked as a Patch Manager in the Dungannon area and a Neighbourhood Warden, he brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the role.

"It's so rewarding to work with our tenants and get positive results that help them feel happy and comfortable in their homes," Peter said.

"As a Patch Manager, you are the face of the Housing Executive and it's important to build trust and develop good relationships with the people living in your area.

"I can help make enquiries about repairs, make sure tenants are

benefiting from schemes and resolve issues around anti-social behaviour.

"Another important part of my job is helping sustain tenancies and that can include anything from providing advice on rent to accessing support services.

"Recently, I worked with a tenant who was very happy in their property but had reluctantly requested a transfer for health reasons. I helped put the tenant in touch with an occupational therapist and as a result we can make adaptations to the property which will allow them to continue living in their home.

"Resolving issues like these is what this job is all about and we will always try our best to achieve a good outcome for our tenants."

Take the first step on your wellbeing journey today...

Get in touch with your Patch Manager by ringing **03448 920 900** or by dropping them a message on the My Housing Executive portal.



A home is more than just walls or a roof over your head, it is a haven of memories.

Can you afford not to have home contents insurance?

Remember, whilst the Housing Executive is responsible for the structure of your home, YOU are responsible for the contents!

Think about everything you have in your home. How much would it cost to buy your possessions again if they were damaged or stolen? By having home contents insurance, you are protecting yourself and your family, as the insurance will pay for your belongings to be replaced.

Insurance policies are available online. Costing from around £5 per month, you can buy contents insurance that provides cover of £10,000 for your personal belongings. This is a small cost to pay, compared to the expense of replacing your valuable possessions like furniture, clothes, kitchen equipment, TVs and computers.

Many of us think that serious incidents such as a fire, burglary or water damage will never happen. But, at any time, through no fault of your own, your personal belongings may be stolen, damaged by fire, storm, flood or burst pipes.

By having a home contents insurance policy in place, you can avoid paying out huge sums of money should the worst happen.

Visit our website at www.nihe.gov.uk for advice on how to easily protect your personal belongings and provide a cost-effective way to replace personal items.

You can also use comparison websites online to research prices and choose a policy that suits you.

Be Gas Safe this winter

Annual Gas Safety Checks

By law, we must carry out an annual service and safety check of all gas appliances that we have installed in your home. This is to ensure that your heating system is running efficiently and safely. It is important that you allow our Gas Safe registered contractor to access your home to carry out this essential work. If you don't allow access, your gas supply will be disconnected, as we can't ensure that your installation is safe to use.

Carbon Monoxide

Whenever our Gas Safe registered contractors install a new or replacement heating system in your home, we will provide you with a carbon monoxide detector or alarm. This will be placed in the room where your boiler is located.

During our essential servicing and maintenance works our Gas Safe registered contractor will also check that the detector is in date and test that it is operational.

Carbon monoxide is a silent killer that you can't see, taste, or smell. This is why it is important to test your detector regularly.

There are also signs that you should look out for including:

- Staining, soot, or discolouration around a gas fire or around the top of a water heater or central heating boiler;
- A yellow or orange flame in a gas appliance;
- Onset of symptoms such as tiredness, headache, nausea, giddiness, pains in the chest and stomach (these can often be mistaken for symptoms of a cold or flu).

If you suspect an appliance is unsafe, turn it off, leave it alone, and call our 24 hour Repair Line, on 03448 920 901. We will have it checked by a Gas Safe registered engineer as soon as possible.



Electric bike and scooter safety

With more people using e-bikes or e-scooters to get around, it is important to know how to charge them safely and correctly. Most e-bikes and e-scooters are powered by lithium-ion batteries, which if not looked after properly, can 'explode' and lead to a rapidly developing fire. This means you need to consider how you should charge and store them.

Storage

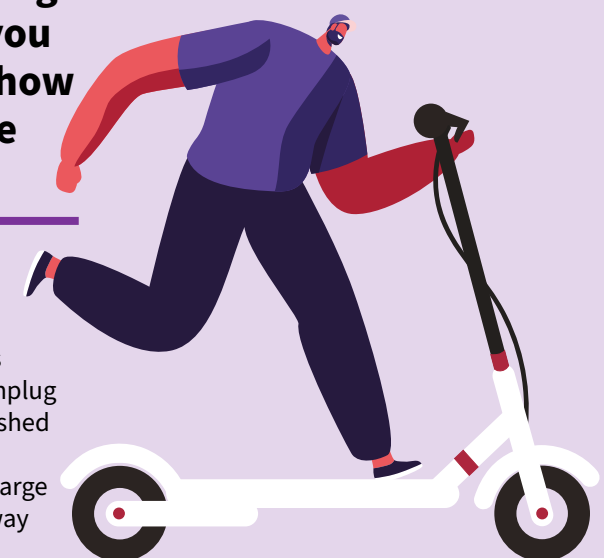
- Do not charge batteries or store your e-bike or e-scooter near flammable materials;
- Do not store or charge your e-bike or e-scooter in communal areas. They can block emergency exits and create a fire risk.

Finally

Enjoy and ride your e-bike or e-scooter safely by regularly checking its battery for signs of damage, if damaged it should be replaced with a battery from a reputable retailer, and shouldn't be used or charged.

Charging

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions and always unplug your charger when it's finished charging;
- Don't leave batteries to charge while you are asleep or away from the home;
- Always use the manufacturer approved charger for the product;
- If you need a new charger, buy an official replacement charger from a reputable seller.





Be ready for the cold, wind and rain

Cooler temperatures and periods of heavy wind and rain can have a harmful effect on your health and home.

Here are some tips to help prepare you for upcoming adverse weather events.

- **Check doors and windows:** Make sure doors and windows are closed or secured;
- **Heating:** Close doors to rooms and try to keep the heating on low during the day. If this is not possible, keep yourself warm by adding extra layers of clothing;
- **Check boiler pressure:** Low boiler pressure can lead to heating issues, so regularly check the pressure gauge;
- **Know where your stopcock is:** A stopcock turns off the mains water supply and is usually found in the kitchen. Turning it off can limit the damage to your home and possessions if there is a leak or burst pipe;
- **Excessive rain:** If water levels rise around your home, block doors with towels to stem the water flow into your home. If water enters your home or you have a leak, check that your electrics are not affected;

- **Check on your neighbours:** Remember, everyone will be feeling the effects of bad weather, and some people may be anxious or feel isolated. Try to stay in contact with your neighbours and help out if you can.

If you are concerned about your home during bad weather you can call our Repairs Line 24 hours a day on 03448 920 901.

Tower blocks update

Our Tower Blocks Action Plan is ongoing, with the decommissioning continuing across three phases:

Phase One

(Monkscoole, Latharna, Coolmoynes, Rathmoynes, Kilbroney, Clarawood, Abbotscoole, Moylena, Belvoir, Breda, Oisin, Ross, Mount Vernon, Woodland, Beechwood and Magowan).

Monkscoole House in the Rathcoole estate was demolished in July 2023. Other blocks in this phase either have plans approved for demolition, or proposals for decommissioning within a five-year time period.

Latharna, Kilbroney, Clarawood and Coolmoynes & Rathmoynes are now fully cleared and demolition works are expected to start in Spring 2025. We are currently rehousing residents in a number of the other tower blocks that have been approved for demolition; Belvoir, Breda and Ross House(s) will all be demolished at some point in the next few years.

The decommissioning of Mount Vernon House will follow the demolition of Ross House. The Abbotscoole House business case has now been completed and forwarded for internal approval. Subject to the Board's approval, the business case will then be referred to the Department for Communities for consideration. Business cases for Beechwood, Woodland and Magowan House(s) will be progressed in 2025. We continue to review the timescale for Oisin House, Belfast due to the proposed

redevelopment area of the nearby Upper Long Streets.

Phase Two

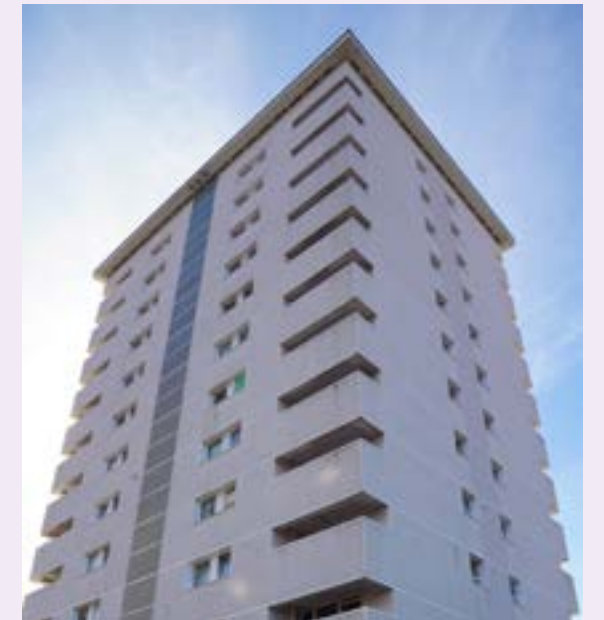
(Finn, Fianna, Riverdale, Parkdale and Ferndale)

These tower blocks are due to be decommissioned over a six-to-ten-year period. Remedial works have now been completed to Finn and Fianna House, alongside Oisin House (Phase One), given the impact of the nearby Upper Long Streets redevelopment.

A number of properties in the 'Dales' blocks have received similar works, and it is hoped to complete the remaining properties over the next year. Once plans for demolition of Phase One blocks have progressed, the business cases for blocks in this phase will be undertaken. In the meantime, we will continue to undertake necessary repair and health and safety works to the blocks.

Phase Three

(Divis, Cuchulainn, Grainne, Maeve, Eithne, Carnet, Whincroft, Glencooles, Carncoole, Moveen, Willowbrook and Woodstock) Our proposal in the Action Plan is that these Phase Three blocks would be retained for a period of more than 10 years with improvement works carried out as needed.



Cuchulainn House

Work is now well advanced on our feasibility study to understand the nature, cost and delivery method of

the necessary improvement works. Once plans for improvement works are established, business cases for the Phase Three blocks will be undertaken.

What happens now?

One of our Tower Blocks Action Plan commitments was to carry out a formal review at the five-year point. As such, this will be carried out in 2025.

We will continue to consult with the residents of each block during the preparation of our plans. Where blocks are scheduled for demolition, we will work with our tenants towards rehousing in line with their preferences.

Residents and owners across all tower blocks are kept updated via our bi-annual newsletter. The most recent edition was issued in October 2024 and can be found on our website www.nihe.gov.uk by searching for 'tower block update.'

Giving Causeway women a voice



Kate Harrison Coates, Head of Services at Causeway Women's Aid and her team are strong advocates for local women.

In October we visited Causeway Women's Aid, at their Coleraine office, to find out how the team are helping women who are experiencing domestic abuse understand their rights and housing options.

We received a very warm welcome when we arrived and were brought in from the brisk autumnal weather to have a cuppa. While waiting on the kettle to boil, the team gave us an overview of the service they provide to women living in the Causeway Coast and Glens council area.

Kate Harrison Coates, Head of Services at Causeway Women's Aid, went on to explain:

"The first thing we do when a woman calls us is listen. This is so we can work out what her options are and help her make decisions that will keep her safe.

Our specialist female advisors know that everyone's situation is different and they're here to guide them on their journey."

Kate continued:



The team, made up of specialist team advisors, are always there at the end of the phone.

After this initial contact is made, the team will provide practical and emotional support to the woman, and her children if required, so she can make informed choices about her accommodation. They can advise on everything from tenancy rights, staying safe at home to arranging temporary accommodation. The team take their lead from each individual woman, offering advice and guidance that is right for them, working at a pace they are comfortable with.

"Many women feel they don't have a voice or can't speak up, but they need to know that their lives don't always have to be this way. They can make changes, big or small, at any point and we will be there every step of the way."

Your home should be a safe haven

We fund a range of charities, via our Supporting People Programme, that help victims of domestic abuse. If you are suffering from, or feel at risk of, domestic abuse please don't suffer in silence. You can find the contact details of your local Women's Aid by scanning this QR code:



If you prefer, you can discuss your situation with your Patch Manager and they can make a referral on your behalf.

We offer a place for everyone

Our people are at the heart of the service we deliver.

A place for everyone

We have countless careers, all under one roof.

Find your place in our place.
[nihe.gov.uk/working-with-us/careers](https://www.nihe.gov.uk/working-with-us/careers)
 One career. Countless possibilities.

**Housing
Executive**



With just over 3,200 colleagues, we are a diverse, inclusive and supportive team, working to transform people's lives and deliver innovative housing solutions.

A place to fulfil your potential

We regularly recruit people to join our teams across our five directorates – Housing Services, Asset Management, Finance, Audit and Assurance, Corporate Services and Regional Services. Whatever your level of experience, education or background, we have a career to suit you.

By finding your place with us, you will have the opportunity to fulfil your potential, to learn and develop and have a valued, varied and challenging career.

We offer diverse and challenging job roles and the opportunity to progress in your career. Your career can evolve alongside your ambition.

A place for growth

We are a flexible and inclusive employer offering great career pathways; enabling you to reach your full potential.

We offer:

- The opportunity to make a real difference to people's lives;
- Varied career pathways and development opportunities;
- Competitive salaries and an attractive pension scheme
- Excellent conditions, generous

leave provision and a flexible approach to work;

- A wide range of health and well-being benefits.

Ready to find your place in our team?

Whether you are laying the foundation of your career or building on experience and skills, we have a place for you.

For more information

Keep an eye on the careers section of our website www.nihe.gov.uk and our social media accounts for more information

[nihe.gov.uk](https://www.nihe.gov.uk)

Apprentices and graduate trainees

We offer a range of opportunities for apprentices and Graduate trainees.

Our apprentices work alongside experienced staff, developing skills and practical knowledge while earning a qualification, making it an ideal route for those beginning their careers in housing.

Our graduate trainees also benefit from tailored learning programmes. For example, our Housing Services graduate trainees gain a foundation in front line services, housing policy, project management, and community engagement.

Both roles offer a unique opportunity to contribute to our mission of promoting safe, accessible, and affordable housing, making a meaningful impact on communities across Northern Ireland and playing a vital role in our workforce.

Anyone who joins our programmes will have the opportunity to attain recognised qualifications whilst earning a competitive salary and can access a wide range of career development options.



I was working in another role within the Housing Executive, saw the advert and applied. It's great getting the chance to learn and get qualified in a trade,
Gerard French. Apprentice Joiner.



The Housing Customer Support Apprentice Programme has been a game changer for me, even at the age of 38! It has given me confidence and has opened doors that I never considered before, **Sandra Quigg. Housing Customer Support Apprentice.**

Whether you are a school leaver, mid-career, changing career or starting out again, we have a range of opportunities for you to start to learn or retrain with us.

Customer Service Excellence as standard



We have recently been reaccredited with the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Standard.

An independent and government accredited service standard, CSE recognises organisations that put customer service first and show how they are committed to continuous improvement.

Our 2024 assessment took place in October/November and involved a series of visits by an external assessor to many of our offices, site visits to community groups, conversations with customers and staff.

The award comes after a thorough assessment process which tested 57 criteria areas.

We have achieved Compliance or Compliance Plus in all assessment elements with 29 elements being identified as Compliance Plus, indicating best practice.

Welcoming the award, our Director of Housing Services Jennifer Hawthorne thanked staff, commenting: “While the assessment focuses on our customer facing outlets it also draws upon and reflects work delivered throughout the year across the Housing Executive.

“This latest accreditation is one of the highest standards in the public sector. It recognises and acknowledges the dedication and commitment of staff and reflects our ongoing commitment to putting our customers at the heart of everything we do.”

“A key element of the accreditation has been the ongoing support of the Central Housing Forum and representatives from local communities and groups. They were keen to highlight some of the excellent initiatives we work in partnership with them to deliver in communities across Northern Ireland.

“In his report, the assessor commented that this is a ‘remarkable achievement’”

Jennifer added,

“We are determined to build on this latest achievement, by continuing to listen to the valuable feedback from our customers and partners, so we can make further improvements to the services we provide.”

Wise up to wise guys

Scams are getting more sophisticated and difficult to spot, so it's important to know what to look for, so you can beat the scammers and

The nature and complexity of scams is continuously changing with scammers always looking for new ways to get ahead. They often pretend to be employed by a trustworthy company and can contact you by phone, text, online or via social media.

There are however steps you can take to identify the signs of deceit before it's too late.

Take the scam test

If you think something is a scam ask yourself these four questions:

1. Does it seem too good to be true?
2. Have they contacted me out of the blue?
3. Have they asked me for my personal details?
4. Have they asked me for money?

If you've answered yes to any of these then it is more than likely a scam. You should make sure you do not give out any personal or financial information.

Want to learn more?

Visit the **ScamWise** section of the NI Direct website.



Celebrating Sunningdale

Six new semi-detached homes have been built using Modern Methods of Construction and ultra-low energy building techniques to PassivHaus standard.

This means the new homes exceed current building regulations and have the latest energy efficient features that will ensure comfortable, future proofed homes with lower heating bills for our tenants.

Speaking before she moved in, tenant Jacqueline Lowry said:

“We are so excited to move into our new home and join the community in Sunningdale.

“This house will make a huge difference for my family. I am looking forward to learning how to make the most of all the energy efficient measures within the house.”



Minister for Communities Gordon Lyons (right), Housing Executive Chief Executive Grainia Long (second right), Housing Executive Chair Nicole Lappin (second left) and GEDA Director of Construction Damian Murray.

During a tour of the recently completed state-of-the-art housing development, our Chair, Nicole Lappin, said: “We are delighted to provide our tenants with high quality, comfortable and energy-efficient homes in a community with high social housing need.

“As the strategic housing authority for Northern Ireland, it is our role to influence the future of social housing and with Sunningdale we are demonstrating what estates and housing developments can look like in the years to come.

“At the outset of this pilot project our aim was not just to build new homes for our tenants for the first time in a generation, but to build future-proofed homes with energy efficient measures that will stand the test of time.

“The ultra-low energy building methods used to construct these

houses means that our tenants will now benefit from improved energy efficiency and a reduction in carbon emissions, lower heating bills, savings from reduced fuel costs and more comfortable homes.”

Following a tour of the homes and after speaking to the new tenants, Minister for Communities, Gordon Lyons, commented: “This is not just the Housing Executive delivering new homes, it is the Housing Executive leading and innovating for Northern Ireland.

“The Modern Methods of Construction approach and the PassivHaus standard that the Housing Executive has achieved will together bring learning for the whole social housing sector here.

“I commend all those involved in this development and wish the residents every happiness in their new homes.”

In September, we celebrated the completion of our first housing scheme in 25 years.



Gerard Flynn, Housing Executive North Belfast Manager hands the keys to a brand-new home at Sunningdale Gardens to tenant Jacqueline Lowry and daughter Keeley-Rose.

Why we might need to access your home



As a landlord, it's important that we meet your needs and you know what to expect from us. Our staff and contractors will occasionally need access to your home to ensure it meets safety regulations.

We will always contact you beforehand and show photographic ID before entering.

We may need access to:

Service your heating appliance:

It's a legal requirement for us to carry out an annual service and safety check of all oil, solid fuel, and wood pellet appliances. This ensures your heating system is operating safely and efficiently.

It is also a legal requirement for us to carry out an annual service and safety check of all gas appliances we have installed in your home. It's

important that you allow our Gas Safe registered contractor into your home to carry out this essential work. If you don't allow access your gas supply may be disconnected as we can't ensure that your gas is safe to use.

Carry out an asbestos survey:

We are legally required to survey your home before any work to check for asbestos. Asbestos does not pose a risk when managed properly, so we will periodically monitor its condition.

Monitor the hygiene and quality of your water storage tank and pipework:

Our contractor carries out Legionella surveys in domestic, commercial and community lets, to identify if any work is needed.

Replace your smoke alarm:

We replace smoke alarms in our properties every ten years. Please remember to test your smoke alarm weekly.

Check carbon monoxide detectors:

We check carbon monoxide detectors as part of the annual heating appliance service. You should also test your detector weekly.

Audit completed maintenance work and inspect electrical wiring:

We aim to check the quality of work and your home's fixed electrical wiring every five years.

For tower block tenants, we may need to check window restrictors and give fire safety advice. If you're not home, please contact us to arrange a suitable time.

Further information

For advice, telephone our repair line on **03448 920 901**. If you think a caller at your home is bogus, call us to verify their details on **03448 920 900**.

Embracing all our neighbours

Below are some of the many languages we can accommodate. Please contact us if there is another language you may need translated.

If English is not your first language and you need help with interpreting and translation the Housing Executive can provide free services on request, please ask for further details at your local office.

ARABIC

لفت غل يه ةيزيل جنال الة غللل نكت مل اذا
يف ددع اسم الجا يل ع لوص حل اجاتحتو مال
خيطتستف ، ةي طخل او ةي فخل ا ةم چرتلا
مده ريفوت ةي ذيفنتل نالفسال ا ةمدخ
لنم ي جري ، بلطلا دن ع ةينا جمل ا تامدخ
نم لي صفتل اب رمال اده لوح راسفتل ال
يل حمل لكتبتم

CANTONESE

如果英語不是你的母語，並且你需要
幫助來進行口譯和文字翻譯，那麼
Housing Executive可以根據請求而提供
免費的服務，請在你當地的辦公室詢問
進一步的詳情。

LITHUANIAN

Jei anglų kalba nėra jūsų gimtoji kalba ir
jums reikia pagalbos dėl vertimo žodžiu ir
raštu, jums pageidaujant Housing Executive
gali suteikti nemokamas vertimo paslaugas;
dėl išsamesnės informacijos prašome kreiptis
į vietinį skyrį.

MANDARIN

如果英語不是你的母語，並且你需要
幫助來進行口譯和文字翻譯，那麼
Housing Executive可以根據請求而提供
免費的服務，請在你當地的辦公室詢問
進一步的詳情。

POLISH

Jeśli język angielski nie jest Państwa językiem
ojczystym i potrzebują Państwo pomocy
w zakresie tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych,
Housing Executive oferuje bezpłatne usługi
tłumaczeniowe na życzenie. O szczegóły
prosimy pytać biuro lokalne.

PORTUGUESE

Se o Inglês não for a sua língua materna
e precisar de ajuda com tradução e
interpretação, o Executivo de Habitação
pode providenciar serviços gratuitos
mediante solicitação, pode obter mais
informações no seu escritório local.

ROMANIAN

Dacă nu sunteți vorbitor nativ de limba
engleză și aveți nevoie de sprijin în
interpretare sau traducere, Autoritatea
Irlandeză pentru Locuințe [Northern
Ireland Housing Executive] vă poate
oferi aceste servicii gratuite la cerere; vă
rugăm solicitați detalii suplimentare la
biroul local.

SLOVAK

Ak angličtina nie je váš materský jazyk
a vyžadujete si pomoc s prekladom a
tłmočením, kancelária úradu pre otázky
bývania (Housing Executive) vám ochotne
poskytne tieto služby bezplatne. Prosím,
požiadajte svoju miestnu kanceláriu o viac
informácií.

SOMALI

Haddii af Ingiriisigu uusan ahayn
luqaddaada hooyo oo aad u baahan tahay
in lagaa caawiyo turjumaadda oraahda
ah iyo midda qoran Agaasinka Guryeynta
(Housing Executive) ayaa adeegyo bilaash
ah bixin kara marka laga codsado, fadlan
faahfaahin dheeraad ah weydii xafiiska
xaafaddaada.

For customers with sensory disabilities, information can be provided in alternative formats like large print, Braille or audio. Sign language interpreters can also be provided, but please give as much notice as possible to allow us to meet your request.

Making life easier with



Our online tenant portal - My Housing Executive - allows you to access information about your tenancy and contact us securely 24 hours a day. Here are some of the ways it can help to make your life easier.

Can I pay my rent?

Yes, you can make a rent payment, order a new payment card, and check your rent balance and account statement via the portal. All you have to do is register online to set up your account.

Can I request a repair?

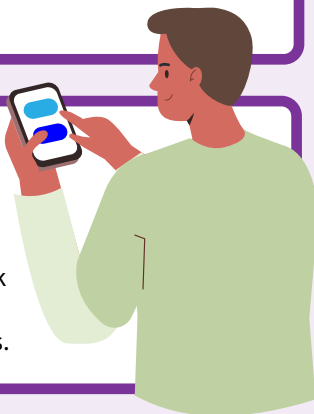
You can request a repair through the portal and track our response. You can also request other services like a transfer, an adaptation to your property or a self-help repair.

Is it secure?

Yes, when you register online you will be asked to provide a personal email address. We will store your details securely and send you secure notifications and alerts. You can also update your contact and personal details at any time.

Can I use the portal on my phone?

You can access the portal from most internet-connected devices including phones, tablets and laptops, so we can be reached whether you are at home, at work or on the go. The portal also allows you to contact us directly through web messages.



Register now

Visit our website **www.nihe.gov.uk** and click on the 'Sign In' icon on the top right hand corner of the homepage to get started. This will take you to the My Housing Executive homepage.

If you require assistance registering with My Housing Executive, please call our dedicated helpline on 03448 920 910 to chat to a member of our staff.

Get in touch

You can contact your patch manager and other members of our housing team in the following ways:



TENANT PORTAL

Send us a message on our tenant portal My Housing Executive at a time that suits you.

Register at **www.nihe.gov.uk**



PHONE

General enquiries

03448 920 900

(lines are open 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Report a repair

03448 920 901

(lines are open 8.30am to 5pm for normal repairs and 24 hours for emergencies).

You can also report a repair by texting **07507 301 011** (starting your message with the word 'REPAIR' and remembering to include your address).



EMAIL

For general enquiries email **information@nihe.gov.uk**



SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a great way to keep up to date with everything happening in your area and you can also report anything you need help with.

f HousingExecutive

X @nihecommunity

@ nihecommunity



FACE-TO-FACE

We understand that you may prefer to speak to someone in person. You can call into any of our offices to talk to our staff or even arrange for someone to call out to your home. Visit **www.nihe.gov.uk** to find your nearest office and opening hours.